

MARRIAGE AMONG /KUNG BUSHMEN

185 polygyny affords women—that none remain long without the support of a husband.
595 They just said they did not want to be second wives, nor did they want their husbands to take second wives, and protests and quarrels attended a husband's proposal to do so.

Marriage by capture

583 Marriage by capture was spoken of fairly frequently by the /Kung in conversation. Elizabeth Marshall Thomas and I questioned a number of informants about it and we are convinced that wives are not actually acquired by this means at present. Perhaps they were in the past. The /Kung are a present-oriented people who make no concerted or consistent effort to retain their history and teach it to their children, [181] and we obtained no significant data on their past customs. Nowadays the idea of capturing wives appears to be enjoyed by the men as a fantasy. The remarks of one /Gaishay illustrate what I mean. He weighs, at a good guess, about ninety pounds and looks like a miniature Mephistopheles. With a gleam he told me that if he wanted to take another wife he would go to her werf, seize her, throw her over his shoulder and run off with her. That is the way Bushmen do, he said, and he wished I could see him do so. I also wished that I could.

Arrangements for marriage

584 First marriages are arranged by the parents of the bride and groom, and second marriages also if the couple are still young. Adults, when both have been married before, may contract subsequent marriages themselves.

[611] Although there is a slight paternal emphasis in this society which recognizes [593] bilateral descent, and the father names all his children, his authority is not clearly dominant over the mother's in the choice of a mate for their child. By and large, it appears that the father and mother talk things over and come to agreement. If they do not agree, it appears that the strength of personality of one or the other, the opinions of relatives, and various circumstances have weight in the decision.

Either the parents of the boy or those of the girl may take the initiative and go to the other parents with the proposal. A go-between is not required, though it is possible that a friend will sometimes act as such. The parents visit and talk, and, if they all agree, the arrangement is thereby settled upon. They normally give each other gifts in honour of the occasion.

Property does not enter much into the consideration of the parents in arranging marriages for their children. No property settlement is made, no bride-price paid, no dowry given, though at the time of the wedding a few gifts are exchanged.

Food and water must, one imagines, weigh in the parents' thinking when a marriage is being arranged, and may sometimes be a determining factor. However, there is a considerable amount of equalization in these supplies. Veldkos¹ and water-holes 423 are not owned by individuals but by headmen for their bands, in a way I shall describe in a paper on bands. In the Nyae Nyae region each band has access to a supply, else the people would be dead or somewhere else, and things balance out in

¹ Veldkos (field food) is an Afrikaans word used to refer to any kind of wild plant material which people gather to eat. Edible fruits, seeds, roots, tubers, leaves, all are included.

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various ways. The affine who marries into the band, as long as he lives with the band, has a right to the water, to the hunting, and to the gathering of the wild foods, as members born to the band have. 423

I think that primarily the values and assets that parents seek in choosing mates for their children have to do with the kind of security which is attained through human responses and relations. Friends may want their children to marry because they know and trust each other. Or a family may want to increase its kinship bonds—and thereby its security—with certain bands for any number of reasons—among them could be food, water, or a desire to have supporting friends in a certain area—and, like the crowned heads of Europe, the /Kung may deliberately seek to establish alliances through marriages. 581 185

Merging with such desires and to be balanced with them are the characteristics of the families concerned. The /Kung want their boys and girls to marry into up-standing families, among people who are 'able to feed themselves', who are 'not lazy and not thin'. They do not want 'far-hearted' in-laws who are not generous in food-sharing and gift-giving. /U, ~~the~~ Toma's wife, said she would take particular note of their generosity in giving bead ornaments to their children. She would not want a daughter of hers to marry among people who were stingy in that. Proper observance of the avoidances and other social regulations is an asset in in-laws, for they can then be assumed to have taught their children how to behave properly. 185 577 581

The individual's characteristics are also a concern. Parents of boys hope the girls to whom their sons are engaged will grow up to be good-looking, because, they say, a man takes pride in a beautiful wife. Xama, the mother of Gao, the headman of Band 2, said she had wanted for her son a light-skinned girl with good teeth who was not too thin and not too tall. But most important of all is a sweet temper, she said. A mother hopes, she said, that the girl will not be lazy or wander about visiting at night at other people's fires 'like a bitch'. The girl should observe the avoidances and the menstruation and other taboos, and in every way behave as a well brought up girl should. However, since the girls are engaged when they are very young, I suppose the parents of the boys can only watch them grow and hope. 185 581 826

Girls would not want a man 'as tall as a giraffe', we were told. They would seek a smaller husband. /U's first husband, from whom she was divorced, is so tall (almost six feet) that people laugh and say, 'Did his mother have a dream with a //gao (a spirit)?'

The girls themselves, all twitters and giggles, told me what they admire in the boys. They like a good hunter like /Gunda; and they like handsome teeth and a wide smile like young Tsamgao's; and straight, slender legs like //Ao's; and a fluid, swift walk like /Gao's; and they hate a big black belly like Gao's—the middle-aged medicine man in a band distant from Gautscha, to whom the young /Doin was married.

The parents of a girl want the boy to be responsible, kind to their daughter and, above all, a good provider—which means a good hunter. They want him to make his arrows straight, to shoot swiftly and accurately, to be able to run down an eland, and, most of all, they want a son-in-law whose heart says to him, 'Why am I sitting lazily here in the werv? Why do I not get up and go hunting?' and who, in obedience to his heart, and the group's desire, and the magic which has been rubbed into his scarifications in the Ceremony of the First Killing, gets up and goes. [304] [881]

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Rosinkis of the Boers

So-called "wild cucumbers"

Mushrooms which grow on termite hills

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[415]

The veld crop that has been gathered is kept in the huts in little sacks made of duiker or ibex leather.

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The Auin also stores small caches of provisions by burying sacks of veld crops; he likewise buries tschamma or ostrich egg shells filled with water. In the tops of large trees one often finds, aside from animal hides, provisions of veld crops which are kept there. [Fig. 9 appears here.]

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Land is held in common, that is, it is the common property of a horde consisting of several families. The game in this territory, as well as the wood and the veld crops, is exclusively for the use of the members of the community that holds the land. The watering places that are to be found there are available for general use, but only if water is abundant. If water is scarce, the local group that holds the land has exclusive right to it.

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The local groups sometimes live at considerable distances from one another so that the same land is used by several settlements. The settlements, after all, do not consist of a fixed number of families, but rather of those who are gathered together in fortuitous groupings as the occasion arises. Whatever the accidental composition of the settlements may be, their members always move within a definite area, and it is always the members of the same larger horde who form the settlements.

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Friendly hordes permit tracking, that is, game that has been wounded on the land of one horde may be pursued on the territory of a friendly horde. A part of the booty is allotted to the "land-owner" within whose territory the game is killed. A definite [685] agreement is required in each case since the Bushman attacks on sight any strange Bushman on his family's terrain.

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Blood vengeance is not sought for a violation of territory if the local groups are especially friendly. The offender is driven off and, in addition, just as in Prussia, his "firearms" and booty are confiscated. The policing of the terrain is done by each Bushman on his communal land.

[721]

If women are caught trespassing, they are taken prisoner and led to the settlement of the owners of the terrain. This frequently leads to war if the women are harmed sexually during their captivity.

[Text continues on page 32]

/155 cont. /

628 the slain man. Now, naturally, a blood feud exists between the settlements, which, incidentally, are related to each other directly and by marriage.

648 Furthermore, it is interesting that the Auin from
[123] Sidonitzaub sent a messenger to me in Rietfontein, where I was station commander, and had him inquire whether I had any objection to their making "orlog" [Tr., probably from the Dutch word oorlog, "war"]. I conveyed to them that the affair was none of my business since the war would take place in British territory. Unfortunately I was transferred from Rietfontein shortly afterward and was therefore unable to witness the campaign as a "military correspondent." According to reliable reports, the war has been settled and three men were killed.

This inquiry addressed to me makes it clear that under the pressure of present conditions the "unfortunate child of the moment" does not always surrender immediately to the impulses of the moment.

674 It is scarcely possible to give even a rough picture of the legal notions of the Auin.

There is no doubt that the Bushman possesses a very definite sense of justice, but I do not feel capable of comparing it intelligibly to our own conceptions of justice.

It is a little easier to indicate what the Bushman (Auin) regards as absolute injustice, such as murder, theft, adultery, violation of the family territory, and stealing water (the latter only if little water is available). At any rate, with extended investigation, the catalogue could be considerably enlarged.

422 Personal property includes the hut (though this is not an object of value), weapons, clothing, utilitarian objects, hides, and ornaments.

It is true that the gathered veld crop, game that has been killed, and water that has been collected are also personal /156/ property, but these are subject to extensive communal use which becomes more limited only in case of famine or a water shortage.

423 The land of the horde is communal property, as are the game, veld crop, wood, and water on the land, the latter with limitations.

When a Bushman has burned off a piece of land in order to

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423 foster the growth of the veld crop, he alone may lay claim to the yield of the burned veld. Others, even members of the same settlement, are not allowed to use it.

The territorial property of the individual hordes is precisely delimited, and the boundaries are known to everyone. Boundary markers naturally do not exist, but with his marvelous sense of place, the Bushman knows exactly, to the last bush, the extent of his territory.

565 Social distinctions do not exist, just as there are no servants or domestics.

576 They greet each other by extending hands in a manner that differs from our practice (see Photo. 43).

567 Slavery is unknown. Men who have been, captured in war
727 are killed; captured women are taken into the victorious group and accorded completely equal rights.

R. Marriage, Position of the Woman, Children

582 Men marry between the ages of about 16 and 18 years, girls between 13 and 16. Both sets of figures naturally are estimates.

584 The candidate for marriage addresses his suit to the girl's mother. If the latter is no longer alive, the nearest relatives (father, uncle, aunt) take her place. The father is consulted only secondarily. The suitor brings his future in-laws presents in the form of game and veld food, sometimes over a period of more than a year.

If the affair proceeds smoothly, the man takes the girl to his hut after a time and the marriage is regarded as consummated.

If, in spite of the consent of her parents, the girl refuses to marry the man (she is entitled to express her wishes and by no means always follows her parents' desires), the young man will finally take the girl to his hut by force and have coitus with her. If she runs away, he brings her back. In this manner, her resistance seems to be gradually overcome.

684 If a man were to violate a girl without the consent of her parents, he would be killed.

585 No special ceremonies are observed to conclude the marriage. The marriage is considered consummated by coitus.

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[27 cont.]

221 Bushmen shrink to miserable skeletons. Many of them at this
 [648] time run to the Blacks or Whites in order to earn something. In
 [731] dry years no attention is paid to the kin group boundaries. All
 [423] gather around the few water holes that are still open. As soon
 as the rain begins, conditions start to improve; the people start
 moving out in various directions, not to meet again until several
 months later at the time of the veldkost harvest here and there.

7. The Course of Life

584 I shall render in literal translation the account that my in-
 formant gave of the way a young man courts a girl:

If a young man wants to marry a girl, he must first speak
 to her and say: "I love you and want to marry you." If the girl
 is willing, she says first: "You must wait." Then she goes to her
 parents and asks them whether they have heard that the boy has
 spoken to her. The parents then ask whether the girl wants to
 marry the man. [28] If the girl says, "Yes," then the parents
 say, "He wants you; he has seen that you are good and hard-
 working; you may marry." If, however, the young man has
 thought the matter over and takes back his words, the girl goes
 to her parents once more, and the boy to his. The latter say:
 "You wanted it this way; nothing can be done about it." In
 case the girl definitely gives her consent, however, the young
 man brings all kinds of little presents and gives them to his future
 bride, who takes them to her parents. The parents-in-law must
 now in turn give presents. With the exchange of presents, the

[583] marriage is regarded as legally concluded.

[114] The hunting test described by Passarge (1) and others is not
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1. Passarge, Die Buschmänner der Kalahari,
 1907.

the rule. Some vain girls demand it, and sometimes young men
 will voluntarily go through with it in order to beat his rivals.
 This hunting test is carried out in the following manner. The boy
 goes hunting without weapons and pursues the game (as a rule,

1 [i.e. The NOT SEASON -- Analyst]

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[31 cont.]

764 of the Bushmen are tied up in a crouched position and buried under termite hills.

"The corpse is usually lowered in such a way that it is received by a man standing in the grave. Aside from those who bring the corpse and dig the grave, no one goes to the interment. The corpse is buried either in a crouched posture or lying in a crouched position. In the case of the crouched posture, the face is eastward, and the elbows rest on the knees, while the hands are on either side of the head. In the case of the crouched position, the corpse is placed on the left side. The left hand is placed under the head, giving the appearance of a sleeping person. The face likewise looks toward the east.

766 [32] "Before their interment, feared men, such as sorcerers who had a malign influence and others who were feared in life, but not women, are firmly tied up with thongs of game hide in the crouched posture described above; then, in some cases, the spine is crushed with a stone or ax, as a result of which the head can be bent even lower and placed between the knees. Tied up in this fashion, they are thrown into a fissure in the earth, into an anteater's hole, or into a small cave."

8. The Hunt

423 It is well known that wherever the Bushmen live more or
224 less undisturbed, each kin group has its precisely defined hunting
[621] territory. Vedder believes that the engravings of game tracks indicate old boundaries, as do the stone heaps which are usually designated as Heiseb graves. In any case the question arises as to who actually established these boundaries. My informants stated unanimously that the division stems from the time when the Bushmen still had a supreme chief. There seems to be some authority, however, even today, since in the bush veld the boundary lines are drawn with reference to certain trees, which, in general do not have too long a life. The Bushmen move back and forth within their hunting territories. It sometimes happens that a young hunter is not thoroughly familiar with the boundaries or that wounded game crosses the boundary. In this case the hunter must

[32 cont.]

- 224 go to the kin group to whom this territory belongs and take the
 423 men to the animal. Then it will be carefully divided down the
 middle; the hunter gets one half, and the owners get the other
 half. Nevertheless, quarrels are common, because there is only
 one of certain organs, such as the heart, liver, etc. These con-
 [194] ditions, however, exist only among the eastern !Kung. A
 Hei//om or a northern !Kung who is found hunting in the territory
 224 of another tribe is regarded as an enemy. Boys' hunting is con-
 [857] fined to lizards, tree rats, and other rodents. They ordinarily
 [411] use the bird arrow, which is carved out of a piece of wood, but
 in contrast to the Ovambo, the older boys here already have
 [223] poisoned arrows. Young and old pursue the hunting of birds with
 great enthusiasm; in particular guinea fowl, sand hens, grouse,
 and the Pau [?] insofar as it occurs in this region. These fowl
 [262] and small bushbucks are the chief sources of the meat in the
 native diet. The forest region of the eastern !Kung is poor in
 [136] large game. Zebras are almost entirely absent, as is the
 wildebeest; the giraffe is very rare. The eland, kudu, hartebeest,
 and especially the gemsbok are relatively more common. Hunt-
 ing drives are organized to hunt the elephant or rhinoceros. First,
 the elephant is separated from the herd. As soon as it has been
 cornered, one Bushman after another springs forward and throws
 his spear. It is also possible to hunt the elephant with poisoned
 arrows; there is a number of thinner spots in the skin at the front
 legs, and the marksman places as many arrows there as possible.
 The elephant does not die; it merely becomes sick. The hunter
 rushes home to get some other men, who then go to look for the
 elephant with spears. Pitfalls are made in the vicinity of the
 watering places, and a pointed pole is placed inside them. The
 Bushmen along the Okovanggo also hunt the hippopotamus with
 pitfalls. The eastern !Kung maintain that in ancient times the
 hippopotamus was also found in their land. The sling trap is made
 [223] in various sizes. The ostrich in particular is usually caught in
 such sling traps, which are provided with a piece of bone bleached
 by the sun. Small cats and the like are also caught with this trap.
 It is likewise placed on the trails of the bushbuck. Jackals and
 the like are caught by lying in wait for them as they come out of
 their dens and then beating them to death with the kirri.

[35 cont.]

322 When all the old women have made their tests, then the children also get some, and the veldkost is, so to speak, made available for general consumption. When a woman has found a spot where (423) there is a great deal of veldkost, she makes a sign at this spot, and then everything growing there belongs to her. No one will take any of it.

(262) There were and still are a whole assortment of types of (888) socha veldkost reserved for the old people. [Fig. 3 appears here.]

11. Ergology

Fire

372 The Bushmen believe that there was a time when they had
773 no fire. The following legend tells how they obtained it: "The ostrich had a firebrand under his wing. He, the owl, and Heiseb played together. Then the ostrich took fright at the owl because he thought the owl had horns. He advised all of them to sleep for a little while. When the owl was asleep, he blew at it and saw that it merely had little tufts of feathers and no horns on its head. Thereupon he awakened the two others again and invited them to go on playing. Then Heiseb said: 'Dear ostrich, please wave your wings.' The ostrich did so, and as a result its firebrand fell to the ground. Heiseb picked it up and threw it to the fig tree, and since then man has had fire." -- The narrative probably comes from the legend-circle of the Hei//om Hottentot. Otherwise, Heiseb never appears in !Kung stories. Two pieces of wood from the 372 fig tree are still used occasionally to make fire. For the most part, the most popular devices for making fire are a striking iron and flint; matches are less [36] prized. A pair of fire sticks, the sucking reeds, a few poisoned arrows, and a bird arrow make up the permanent inventory of the quiver.

[42 cont.]

178 He died when his successor, Amme, was still a small boy. Amme,
622 however, was unable [43] to learn much from his father; he was
not a good chief, and he died while still young. Since then the
!Kung Bushmen have not had a supreme chief. One of my in-
formants, Doctor X'amme, claimed to be the great-grandson of
the great chief of the same name.

The following from Von Zastrow and Vedder (1) should

1. Op. cit., pp. 412, 424.

be mentioned:

593 "The father is the chief of the family. All must respect
596 him. Children may not call him by name. -- The chief's posi-
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[276]



Fig. 15. Dacha Pipe of the !Kung Bushmen (from the
Lindenmuseum, Stuttgart, 29464).

tion is generally passed from father to son. If the son is not yet
an adult when his father dies, the father's younger brother takes
his place. Each kin group has a territory that has been inherited
from ancient times. The territory is called Gao and might corre-
spond to the German concept Gau [canton, district].

"There are kin groups that are so far apart that a journey
of several days lies between them. For example, the territory
north of the Omuramba-Owambo near Kajus, where the manketti
tree (Ricinodendrum bantaneni) occurs, belongs to a kin group that
ordinarily lives over 100 kilometers away and comes there only
when the oleaginous fruit is ripe.

"Kin groups with two hunting and gathering regions come
into being through the fusion of two kin groups that have inter-
married for so long that fusion came about automatically.

[43 cont.]

423 "The graves of the ancestors are within the kin group's terri-
614 tory. They are marked by the large piles of stone placed on them.
769 The ancestors are regarded as the guardians of the kin group's
territory. Hence, departure from the territory must be announced
by the chief or an elder at the ancestral grave without special
ceremonies; similarly, an announcement must be made there
when the kin group again moves into the territory."

423 The property of the kin group, aside from its territory, in-
614 cludes the veldkost, the game, and, above all, the watering
place.

13. Illnesses and Treatment

826 The anatomical knowledge of the Bushmen is quite ex-
tensive as a result of their way of life as hunters.

[76] The heart is regarded as the seat of life, and the breath
has some connection with the heart. Their surgical knowledge is
752 confined to the extraction of thorns by means of an awl-like in-
757 strument and to the relatively effective bandaging of hand and leg
278 fractures. Their supply of medicines, on the other hand, is very
limited. In what follows, I shall list the common illnesses and
their treatment.

Eye Inflammation

752 Both dry and exudative eye inflammations, caused by sand
and irritating grass seeds, are extremely widespread, and blear
eyes are the rule among older people. These diseases, however,
are not nearly as grave among the !Kung living in the forest as,
say, among the Bushmen of the western Kalahari or among those
[826] of Naukluft. Among the latter, blear eyes are even regarded as
signs of beauty in young girls. Ordinary eye inflammations that
pass in a short period of time mean nothing. They are treated by
[753] rubbing with fat. If the ailment lasts for a longer period of time,
then //Gauab [Fig. 16 appears here] certainly had something to
do with it; the doctor is called in and, after some treatment,
[755] produces a "little black medicine" from the eye.

[59 cont.]

20. Law

671 The norms of natural law among the Bushmen are the
 627 same as among us. The family head is at the same time the supreme judge. Since even the nearest kin group is regarded in a sense as a foreign state, however, the boundaries between law, war, and vengeance are exceedingly fluid. The domain of law, therefore, is actually confined to the family. Since the only
 [681] punishment that can be effectively inflicted is the death penalty, it is rarely applied among married men, [60] for the judges and executioners must provide for the condemned man's survivors. In olden times the women condemned to death were burned or beaten to death with the kirri, and the men were killed with the poisoned arrow.

● 423 The right to personal possession of utilitarian objects, honey, and certain types of veldkost is strictly respected. The soil is common property of the kin group, as is any big game
 [224] that is killed. If a wounded animal dies in the domain of the neighboring kin group, the hunter must go there and report it. The dead prey must then be divided. Since, however, there are
 [578] some unpaired organs, fighting and killing easily arise concerning them. Blood vengeance is practiced, but can be resolved
 [627] through negotiation.

423 "Each kin group has a territory that has been inherited
 614 from ancient times. The territory is called Gao and might correspond to the German concept Gau [canton, district].

[361] "There are kin groups that are so far apart that a journey of several days lies between them. For example, the territory north of the Omuramba-Owambo near Kajus, where the manketti tree (Ricinodendrum bantaneni) occurs, belongs to a kin group that ordinarily lives over 1,000 [sic] kilometers away and comes there only when the oleaginous fruit is ripe.

"Kin groups with two hunting and gathering regions, come into being through the fusion of two kin groups that have inter-married for so long that fusion came about automatically.

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614 cludes the veldkost, the game, and, above all, the watering
place (1).

1. Von Zastrow and Vedder, op. cit.,
p. 434.

775 As has already been said, the Bushman does not believe
[626] in punishment after death. On the other hand, he is convinced
that the evil that he himself has done will befall him or his dogs
in the same way.

681 In former times banishment from the kin group was likewise
648 customary, and the exile would soon perish, since the Bushman
177 cannot survive by himself in the wilderness for any length of time.
Nowadays, such individuals, just like those who were expelled
from the Bantu tribes, move to land owned by Europeans and find
work there. It is obvious that they do not help to improve the
reputation of the Coloreds.

695 In cases of doubt, the Bushman swears by the great captain:
nu X'u.

681 Instead of formal expulsion, the people may boycott out-
762 laws, who are thereby driven to such despair that they commonly
commit suicide. Suicides also occur for other reasons.

21. Conflicts with Europeans

649 Before the police zone boundary was erected, the Bushmen
found themselves in a latent state of war with their neighbors.
Part of their list of sins will be cited here.

According to Toke, the !Kung near Keibeb in 1925 at-
tacked eight Barotse [Lozi] and killed them, and purportedly ate
them. Later, three Ovambo were attacked by surprise, killed,

*Auin
Naron
Nogau

[72 cont.]

163 children, who are always approximately two or three years apart.

585 Among the Naron the bride is formally abducted; the word
[583] for "to marry" is the same as "to catch." Actually, however,
582 negotiations precede this abduction. Among the Naron exogamy
591 now applies only to actual siblings. After the wedding the young
847 couple moves to the village of the bride's parents and sometimes
855 stays there for years. There is also infanticide among the Naron.
Otherwise, however, the Bushmen are greatly attached to their
children.

5. State and Law

622 Among the *Auin, the chief's position is hereditary in the
[178] man's tribe. The same is true among the Nogau. Among the
Naron there are no actual chiefs any more. The last one lost his
authority by staying on the farms most of the time as a worker.
Bleek believes that formerly such a chief ruled 30 to 50 families.
[701] In most recent times all these tribes had a war chief, at least
nominally.

422 Among all three tribes the conception of private ownership
685 of utilitarian objects is very strongly developed, and theft is
punishable by death. Every kin group has a certain territorial
district. The boundary markers are not clearly defined everywhere
423 in this flat terrain, so that crossing them does not have the same
serious consequences as it does in the north. On the other hand,
a person who finds game that was killed by arrow poison but not
shot by him, may not take any of it. The gathering of veldkost
is permitted everywhere. A person who finds a stock of honey, on
the other hand, makes a sign there, and it is henceforth his private
property. Among the *Auin individual Bushmen burn parts of the
[222] veld, and all the veldkost that grows there is regarded as the in-
[425] dividual's private property.

628 The feuds between individual kin groups are designated as
721 wars, but since legal revenge is practiced almost exclusively
against members of other hordes, every [73] enforcement of
the law at the same time means war. Among the Nogau, war
is ceremoniously announced by messengers.

organisation among them. The various so-called tribes bear⁶¹⁹ distinctive names, mostly of Bushmen or Hottentot origin, the significance of which is in most instances no longer known. Judging by the practice which still exists among the Bushmen they are in all probability descriptive either of the territory occupied by certain groups or of some physical or other characteristic of such territory or groups. Each tribe is composed of a number of family groups all of whom claim relationship to each other through a common tribal ancestor. Thus, for example, according to the traditions of the $\nabla A\phi-//\tilde{e}in$ all the groups constituting that tribe are descended from a "first big $\nabla A\phi-//\tilde{e}in$ Bushman." A similar belief likewise exists among other tribes. Nothing in the nature of a central authority whose decisions are binding on all members of the tribe is met with among them, nor is collective action taken in the interests of the tribe as a whole. Each family group⁶¹⁹ forms an independent unit by itself, possessing its own group⁶²¹ area and authority over and specific rights within such area only. In relation to other groups it is collectively responsible for the actions of each of its members. When differences arise they are confined to the groups concerned and not participated in by the rest of the tribe. On occasion, however, a weak group will seek and sometimes obtain assistance from a stronger one, but such alliances are never of a binding or permanent nature. The most common causes of inter-group⁶²⁸ quarrels are trespass, theft and adultery. The ensuing conflicts generally assume the form of a blood feud which is continued until a more or less equal toll of life has been taken by both sides. Women are never killed intentionally during⁶²⁷ the course of these feuds but it not infrequently happens that when one group overwhelms another the women are made captive and taken in marriage. Further as far as can be ascertained under no circumstances will the victors deprive the vanquished of their territory or occupy such territory lest harm or disaster should overtake them. The more widely separated groups of the tribe have no personal knowledge of or direct personal contact with each other and generally live in such superstitious fear and dread of each other that the members of one will not undertake journeys into the territory of another, even when accompanied by Europeans. The⁶¹¹ group areas are separated from each other by neutral zones into which nobody will venture except during the course of visits. These zones are usually formed by belts of trees, open flats, water courses, etc. Territorial boundaries are observed⁶²³ in a most scrupulous manner even by closely related groups who are living on the most friendly terms with each other. Each family is inseparably united to its habitat and has a superstitious dread of any locality but its own. The result is that even the members of completely disorganised groups are loth to seek employment outside the boundaries of their ancestral territory.

- 622 At the head of each group is a big man or chief. Though usually considered to be a chief in name only and without any authority over the members of the group, he in fact does exercise considerable influence in the life of the community because in him are vested certain functions, the performance of which are of vital importance to the welfare of his people.
- [423] The family area with its food and water supply, as well as the fire, are all looked upon as belonging to him. Among the tribes of the Kalahari he is succeeded by a son or, failing such, by the nearest male relative.) Among the *Hei-//om*, on the other hand, the eldest sister's eldest son succeeds to the chieftainship. Marriage in the group being exogamous and patrilineal, the rest of the group consists of male relatives of the chief with their wives and families. The whole group lives in a common werft or encampment which is laid out on a definite plan. The huts of the married families are placed about 15 to 20 feet apart and arranged in the form of an irregular circle 60 to 80 yards in diameter. Among the [184] *Hei-//om* the hut of the chief is always placed in the east, facing, but at some distance away from, the others. In the Kalahari it may occupy any part of the circle. At or near the middle of the werft is situated a large tree which is reserved as the meeting place for the men and for ceremonial [562] and other purposes. Among some tribes women are entirely forbidden to approach it or to join the men when gathered underneath it. Within the circle adolescent young girls and [1882] boys are accommodated in separate huts some distance away [342] from each other. Among the more primitive groups the boys are not provided with a hut, but sleep under the tree in the centre. Mature nubile young women either remain in the young girls' hut or occupy huts next to those of their parents, but inside the circle. Old widows and widowers, as also [589] visitors, live outside the circle of the married people. The dancing place is situated within the circle.
- 184 Huts vary considerably in size and shape among the various [342] tribes. In its most primitive form the hut is four to five feet in height and of very simple design, consisting merely of a semi-circular shelter of branches planted into the ground and covered with grass. Hut-making is the work of women, and a [462] husband does not interfere with his wife's building operations. When it becomes necessary to desert an old camp and establish a new one the site for the latter is selected by the chief, who [166] deposits his household and other effects on the place on which [342] his own hut is to be erected. After the other members have [622] done likewise he proceeds to light a new fire by means of firesticks. Brands from the fire of the old werft may not be used for this purpose. From the fire kindled by him each family then lights its own, after which the women may begin with the building of the huts.
- 361 In each group area the permanent encampment is situated [312] in the vicinity of the main water supply. When the area is of considerable extent the group, however, moves about from one place to another according to the season and the

648 that hunting cattle was extremely easy, and also, very probably, they wanted to revenge themselves upon the owners of the cattle, whom they believed to be encroaching upon the
 • [423] land they considered their own. Today, largely because the ownership of the land has been determined, many fewer cattle are killed by Bushmen.

566 Of course, it is quite against the law for any farmer to keep
 687 Bushmen against their will and without recompense, but in the most remote outposts, on many farms, the laws cannot always be enforced. In the Bechuanaland Protectorate today, 657 and also, I believe, in South-West Africa, the governments 563 are trying to set wage scales and provide education for Bushmen, something very difficult for these governments to do as 566 the Bushmen represent only a small fragment of the population, pay no taxes whatever, of course, and are in great demand as laborers; but the only Bushmen who so far can benefit from this are those who already live on the more central farms. Most Bushmen live in the veld, many in almost unreachable parts of the desert, and these people are still being taken by farmers and made to work almost as slaves.

466 Usually Bushmen do not run away from their masters un-
 566 less a very good chance presents itself, such as the master's departure for a time, in which case he may return to find that all his Bushmen have run. But to escape is not always easy; the Bantus usually ride after the escaping Bushmen and drag them back, sometimes beating them severely as well. We once learned of a Bushman who, trying to escape, was captured by his Bantu master and beaten to death, his potential labor being sacrificed to set an example for others.

A European farmer can sometimes get police help in recapturing his escaped Bushmen if the farmer has paid the Bushmen some wages in advance and is owed the Bushmen's labor. European farmers are also not always lenient with

609 Gai on the hood to point the way. From his higher position he noticed the long horns of a gemsbok in the grass and he signaled for the jeep to stop. Then he, John, and Theunis, taking a rifle, slipped out of the jeep and ran off after it, bent over and crouched so low that only their backs showed, as the backs of animals would, gliding above the grass. The gemsbok saw them and ran away toward a patch of heavy bush in the plain, the great V of horns a crown over its head. The men ran after, standing now, and in an hour they came back to where Ukwane and I were waiting, lying on our stomachs under the jeep to be in shade, saying that they had killed it. We drove to the spot where the gemsbok, a female, lay and brought her with us, a present to offer the other Bushmen.

361 We drove for several hours and at last we came to a wide plain, grown over heavily with small trees of slender trunks, with a few short branches sprouting leaves, like fence posts. Gai directed us to one of the smaller trees in the center of the plain and told us to stop. He climbed down and looked
 [137] around over the veld, then bent and picked up a small pipe,
 274 a piece of the leg bone of an antelope. He asked us for a match, lit his pipe, and smoked it.

At last we noticed on the other side of the tree two shallow depressions scooped in the sand and lined with grass, like
 [53] the shallow, scooped nests of shore birds on a beach—the homes of the families, where the people could lie curled up
 [132] just below the surface of the plain to let the cold night wind which blows across the veld pass over them.

Other than the depressions, except for a small pile of brown, twisted bean shells, no sign would show that people lived there. Later we saw another scooped pit and a stick
 [4-23] thrust upright in the ground beside it, right at our feet, which was Gai's place; the stick was to mark the spot, although Gai

The Bushmen

41

could have found his shallow pit at any time of the day or ³⁶¹night. 423 ●

Nobody was there; everyone had run away. We sat down ⁶⁰⁹and waited while Gai put his hands to his mouth and shouted, trying to summon the people back again. When nobody came or even answered him, he flung his pipe to the ground and marched off to find them among the bushes, alternately shouting to his hidden relatives and muttering to himself, for they might be far away and the day was getting warm.

We sat in the middle ground between the depressions so ³⁶¹that we wouldn't risk stepping on or crushing anybody's hidden things, for, without knowing it, a European can in a moment trample through a Bushman's cache, breaking the delicate bone or wooden objects, bending the reed arrows, or crushing eggshell beads. Also, among certain groups of ³⁴²Bushmen, every fire has a man's side and a woman's side, ⁵⁹²determined by the position of the fire as you face the doorway of the scherm, the man's side being on the right, the woman's on the left. If a man sits on the woman's side, or where a ⁷⁷⁸woman has been sitting, he will become impotent and will ⁸⁴²also lose his power to hunt, and if a woman sits where a man ⁷⁵³has been sitting, she will get a disease in her vagina. Some- ²²⁴thing intangible, invisible, but dangerously powerful, remains ⁵⁶²on the ground. We did not know which side was which of ⁷⁸⁴this werf's fires, or even for sure where the fires were; we did not even know that the Gikwe had this custom, for we had learned it from Kung Bushmen, but we knew that if they did they would not welcome our contaminating their ground. We would have liked to look around, but the best thing we could do was to keep our big boots and our bodies away from their delicate, fragile, almost invisible community.

136 stood on his branch with the legs wide apart, bracing himself against the wind. When I got near he dropped from his branch and let the wind carry him away, and I saw that he had been watching a colony of ground squirrels close by which had not seen him and did not see me. They, too, were miserable with the cold, for they walked around slowly as they looked for seeds to eat. I sat down to watch them, which they noticed, and some of them stood up to watch me. Their fur was oddly greenish and it blew in the wind showing little patches of white. They had long fat bellies, long heavy thighs, and little feet, and when they stood up they, too, kept their legs wide apart and braced. As they peered at me I heard on the wind almost inaudibly high, soft whistles, their cries of warning to each other. They decided I was dangerous and vanished down their holes.

123 I came back to the werf with some wood, which I gave to the Bushmen. They reached out their hands for it and put it on their fires, but they didn't say a word. Later, in our camp, we put all the wood we had on one great fire, where the Bushmen joined us and where we spent the morning making and drinking cocoa. We even put up a white canvas, and, lying between it and the fire, we were fairly warm.

423 Ukwane used that occasion to tell us something about his
621 life and his relatives, his former wives, the children he had
602 fathered and where they lived. Most of this centered around
159 melon rights, or who could live in which areas, for if a person is born in a certain area he or she has a right to eat the melons that grow there and all the veld food. It is perhaps this factor that explains in part why the Gikwe bands are composed the way they are; a man may eat the melons wherever his wife can and wherever his father and mother could, so that every Bushman has in this way some kind of rights in many places. Gai, for example, ate melons at Ai a ha'o be-

Gai and Ukwane

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cause his wife's mother was born there, as well as at his own⁴²³
 birthplace, the Okwa Omaramba, where we had found the⁶²¹
 eighteen Bushmen, who after all were not strangers but⁶⁰²
 closely related to Gai and Ukwane and an extension of Uk-¹⁵⁹
 wane's band.

Ukwane himself had had three wives, and he and his first⁵⁸⁶
 wife had been divorced, which Bushmen do by announcing⁵⁸⁷
 the divorce and separating. There is no ceremony connected¹⁵⁹
 with divorce, and no difficulty, as there is no ceremony con-
 nected with any marriage but the first. After a divorce a Bush-
 man man may take up residence with another woman whom
 he prefers.

Without the visible evidence of ceremonies, however, it⁸³⁷
 is hard for non-Bushmen to recognize what is happening, as¹⁵⁹
 occasionally Bushmen live together for short periods without
 being married, or commit adultery. But in cases such as these
 there is someone who does not want the union to be per-
 manent, either the man or the woman, or perhaps his or her
 children; perhaps even the man and woman are tabu rela-
 tives, and unless everyone concerned is more or less in accord,
 the union does not take place. Among Bushmen, incest and^[684]
 adultery are strongly condemned.

Once, among Kung Bushmen we lived with, a woman ran⁸³⁷
 away from her husband to take up with another man. She⁵⁹³
 had considered marrying him, and they ran off one night to
 his family to live permanently. When her husband found out,
 he got so wildly angry, taking up his spear and sharpening it,^[578]
 that the headman of the band set off after the elopers to pre-
 serve the peace. My brother and I went with him, and at
 noon we found the lovers resting in the shade.

The headman talked with the elopers and told them how
 they were bringing shame on both their families, and how
 the woman's husband was violently upset. By this time the

11:Marshall E-5 (1950-1955) 1958
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

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● [423] The headman of each band is considered to "own" a waterhole. What he is considered to "own," is both the water and the *veldkos* of the district. The ground itself is described as *chi dole*, worthless. Headmanship is hereditary, the headman being the oldest son of the previous headman although, if the male line is cut off for a generation, headmanship is passed through the eldest daughter to her eldest son. But head-

[p. 72]

626 horror to a !Kung! The worst dream
might be to see the fires flickering in
the *werft* at midnight and be unable to
go to them. All the people we knew
could tell us of only one time when
such a departure from the group oc-
curred: and the man had gone insane,
[158] had murdered and then run raving
into the veld. There he had lived for
a little while in a hole, then died.

622 It is in connection with the need
• 423 to live widely spread over the land
that the !Kung headman's functions
are peculiar. There is one essential
qualification to headmanship, in ad-
dition to heredity. A headman cannot
leave his waterhole to join another

[p. 81]

11: Marshall E-5 (1950-1955) 1958
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

622 band and still remain a headman, for
he, in his person, does not possess
headmanship. It is only when a person
is *born* headman, and in association
with his waterhole, that he assumes
the full authority of headmanship. We
have seen that headmen were con-
sidered to "own" the water and *veld-*
kos of a district. I believe this associa-
tion is another way of expressing
what the !Kung mean by "own": the
headman is the symbol of a place.

In the same manner that a head-
man "owns" a district, he also
"owns" other geographical features
of the country. These include pans
that fill during the rains, *veldkos*

622 areas, baobab trees, and—most important—*mangetti* trees that hold water in their trunks, and *tsi* areas. It is these “owned” features, and the direction from the waterhole in which they lie, that define a territory. Since, as we have seen, *mangetti*’s and *tsi* are the most important !Kung resources, they are the main determinants of a direction.

But animals are *not* owned. Neatly bounded sections of the countryside are *not* owned. A territory, therefore can best be defined as the combination of a permanent waterhole and a direction: the !Kung so define it by the word “side.” One headman’s territory is said to be on this “side.”

361 JUST as the Kalahari’s scant re-
621 sources of food and water are distributed in accordance with a geographical pattern, the !Kung bands
622 are distributed in accordance with both a geographical and a social pattern. Natural resources are the focal points in the geographical pattern of band distribution: headmen are the focal points in the social pattern. In a sense, headmen tie together the two patterns, the concept of headmanship being the embodiment of a certain quantity of resources in a person around whom a band can take shape and operate. Because of their kin ties with a headman, the people living round him, clustering their *skerms* around his and moving with him over his territory, feel right in being where they are.

622 The headman receives no special
554 privileges. He is no more wealthy than other men. If he is a leader, he may assume responsibility and speak out. But, as headman, he need not speak, for headmanship is a silent office and while the headman lives—by his waterhole or out somewhere on his territory with his band—he serves his whole purpose.

423 Most of the permanent waterholes
312 have two !Kung bands associated with them, and the *tsi* areas are likewise shared by bands from the same and different waterholes. Such sharing may come about because two brothers (only one of whom may be the true headman) live together and feel they possess joint claims. It may come about through the passage of time, which confuses genealogies and lets claims, once tenuous, become firm through usage. The !Kung are a people of present tense, living—in their minds as well as with their

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HAPPY LIFE of children includes such moments as these: a laughing game of

"pull-away," above.

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bodies—from day to day. If the water-holes were not shared, some bands would be without permanent water.

Not all !Kung territories are of equal value in terms of food and water. Some people have *mangetti* nuts, some have *tsi*, and some have both. There is mild wealth, and gentle poverty in *Nyae Nyae*. Territories also change in value year by year. The rains may fail in some parts of *Nyae Nyae*, and fall in others. In normal years, *mangetti's* in the north may become available earlier in the season than those of the western forests. Because of the flexibility of band composition, the bands gathering *mangetti's* in such a favored area are enlarged by people who would otherwise have to wait.

This is usually a temporary situation, the newcomers having more the status of guests than members of the bands. Often, whole bands—headman and all—will visit kin in this manner. During years of desiccation, the fact that a person has several choices of bands in which to live becomes vital to him—he can move from a hopeless place to perhaps a better one.

By such means, balance works out between the desert's resources and the numbers and distribution of !Kung who exploit them. No one district or *mangetti* forest could support more than a limited number of people. Only certain people possess the necessary kinship qualifications to join a band. The flexibility of their

[P. 87]

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SHARING, TALKING, AND GIVING: RELIEF OF SOCIAL TENSIONS AMONG /KUNG BUSHMEN

LORNA MARSHALL

THIS paper describes customs, practised by the /Kung Bushmen in the Nyae Nyae region of South Africa, which help them to avoid situations that are likely to arouse ill will and hostility among individuals within the bands and between bands. Two customs which seem to be especially helpful and which I describe in detail are meat-sharing and gift-giving. I mention also the /Kung habits of talking, aspects of their good manners, their borrowing and lending, and their not stealing.¹ 121

The common human needs for co-operation and companionship are particularly apparent among the Nyae Nyae /Kung. Independent living, outside the band structure,² does not exist for individuals. Nuclear families do not live alone. The arduous hunting-gathering life would be impossible without the co-operation and companionship of a larger group. Moreover, in this society the ownership of the resources of food and water is organized through the headmen of bands, and individuals have rights to these resources by being members of a band connected to the headman by some near or remote kin or affinal bond. The /Kung are also extremely dependent emotionally on the sense of belonging and on companionship. Their need to avoid loneliness, I think, is actually visible in the way families cluster together in their werfs and in the way people sit, often touching someone else, shoulder against shoulder, ankle across ankle. Comfort and security for them lie in belonging to their group, free from hostility or rejection. 601

Their security and comfort must be achieved side by side with self-interest and much jealous watchfulness. Altruism, kindness, sympathy, or genuine generosity were not qualities which I observed often in their behaviour. However, these qualities were not entirely lacking, especially between parents and offspring, between siblings and between spouses. One mother carried her sick adult daughter on her back for three days in searing summer heat for us to give her medicine. /Naoka carried her lame son, Lame ≠Gao, for years. Gau clucked and fussed over his second wife, Khuan//a, when she was sick. When /U had a baby, her sister, Di/ai, gathered veldkos for her for five days. On the other hand, people do not generally help each other. They laugh when the lame man, Kham, falls down and do not help him up. /U's jealous eyes were like those of a viper when we gave more attention to her husband, ≠Toma, than to her because he was much more ill. And, in the extreme, there is the report from the 1958 expedition of an instance of callous indifference in one band and the probable abandonment of a dying old childless woman, an old aunt, when her sister, with whom she lived, had died. 578 593

Occasions when tempers have got out of control are remembered with awe. The 598 606

¹ This description of the /Kung in the Nyae Nyae region is based on observations made during our several expeditions between 1951 and 1959. Changes in the conditions under which the /Kung live are to be expected, and how these changes will affect the

practice of the customs here described we do not know.

² Lorna Marshall, ' /Kung Bushman Band Organization', *Africa*, vol. xxx, no. 4, Oct. 1960. 114

SOCIAL TENSIONS AMONG /KUNG BUSHMEN

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can afford to be a little luxurious. They rub it on themselves and on their implements and they eat it. ≠Toma said that, when he had eland fat to give, he took shrewd note of certain objects he might like to have and gave their owners especially generous gifts of fat.

Real property and the sources of food and water are owned by the headman for the band and cannot be given away. However, meat, once it is distributed after the hunt, and veldkos, once it is gathered, become private property and may be given. Artifacts are privately owned by the individual man, woman, or child, as outrightly owned if received as a gift as if made by the individual. They borrow and lend a great deal—in itself this is one of the ways they support each other and aid themselves in maintaining social solidarity—but this does not blur the clarity of ownership. Each object acquires some markings of its own from the maker and from usage. It is easy for the /Kung, with their highly developed powers of observation and visual memory, to keep track of the commonest objects, know the ownership, and remember the history of the gifts.

As far as we know, no artifacts or materials are taboo as gifts. For instance, women may be given weapons, although it is taboo for women to touch them.

In quantity the gifts varied. One which /Ti/kay gave to ≠Toma was considered generous. It was a fine ostrich egg shell headband, three ostrich egg shells, and a well-tanned duiker skin as soft as suede. Another generous gift consisted of a knife, a spear, and a triple string of traded white European beads. Often gifts were less. The feelings persons have for each other, the degree of their past indebtedness, what they happen to possess and can give, determine the generosity of the gift.

The acquisition *per se* of the objects was seldom, I believe, of primary importance to most individuals in gift-giving—that is, if the objects were their own artifacts. As the /Kung come into more contact with Europeans—and this is already happening—they will feel sharply the lack of our things and will need and want more. It makes them feel inferior to be without clothes when they stand among strangers who are clothed. But in their own life and with their own artifacts they were comparatively free from material pressures. Except for food and water (important exceptions!) of which the Nyae Nyae /Kung have a sufficiency—but barely so, judging from the fact that all are thin though not emaciated—they all had what they needed or could make what they needed, for every man can and does make the things that men make and every woman the things that women make. No one was dependent upon acquiring objects by gift-giving.

They lived in a kind of material plenty because they adapted the tools of their living to materials which lay in abundance around them and which were free for anyone to take (wood, reeds, bone for weapons and implements, fibres for cordage, grass for shelters), or to materials which were at least sufficient for the needs of the population. The Nyae Nyae /Kung had hides enough for garments and bags; they kept extra hides when they needed them for new garments or when they wanted them for trade; otherwise they ate them. The /Kung could always use more ostrich egg-shells for beads to wear or trade with, but, as it is, enough are found for every woman to have a dozen or more shells for water containers—all she can carry—and a goodly number of bead ornaments.

In their nomadic hunting-gathering life, travelling from one source of food to

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Gathering Mangetti Nuts

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eral large groves of mangetti trees (*Ricinodendron rautanenii* Schinz) in the region, all on great waterless white sand dunes, and one extensive area in which *tsi* grows. *Tsi* (*Bauhinia esculenta* Burch) is the seed of the vine that runs along on the surface of the ground. Both mangetti nuts and *tsi* are excellent foods, rich in oils and proteins, and so important to the !Kung that they organize their lives to a considerable extent around them.

Each band, according to !Kung social structure, owns and lives within what we call a territory. The band, through its headman (in a way to be explained later), owns the veldkos and water resources within its territory. The territories are varied in size and shape and sometimes consist of portions that are not even contiguous. The boundaries are vague, for the need to draw fine boundary lines is not great. In the interior of the region, where water is so scant, in roughly 8000 square miles live only 17 bands, comprising 447 persons. The other bands and employed groups live on what we call the periphery of the region. The !Kung say that one cannot eat the ground itself so it does not matter to whom it belongs. It is the patches of veldkos that are clearly and jealously owned, and the territories are shaped in a general way around these patches. The !Kung of the interior have settled themselves in such a way that every band has access to areas of edible roots and to either a mangetti grove or a *tsi* patch. A few bands have both.

The strong concepts of ownership of veldkos by the band operate almost like a taboo. No external force is established to prevent one band from encroaching on another's veldkos or to prevent individuals from raiding veldkos patches to which they have no right. This is just not done. Fear of fighting is one of the deterrents. The poisoned arrows of the Bushmen are as deadly

[p. 24p]

LORNA MARSHALL

The *poisoned arrows of the Bushmen are as deadly* 249 423
 to man as to game and they are always at hand. A mere nick and a speck of 628
 poison in the bloodstream can be fatal. There are no known antidotes. 721
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As skilled trackers of game, Bushmen develop their powers of visual ob- 257
 servation and train their visual memories to such a high degree that they
 know everyone's footprint as well as his face. This is another deterrent, for
 no one could steal veldkos without leaving his marks and having his identity
 detected. Theoretically, in !Kung society the thief may rightfully be killed by 685
 the person or the band from whom he has stolen, but he may fight back, and
 relatives could also become involved and the fighting would spread. In the
 opinion of the !Kung, situations likely to engender hostility are assiduously to
 be avoided, to say nothing of actual fighting. Breaches of this intention are
 very rare.

Life throughout the seasons is planned around the veldkos gathering. 221
 The people know at what seasons the various veldkos will ripen and about 222
 how much each patch will yield if the rains have been good or if they have 1122
 been poor. The !Kung are not, according to our way of thinking, exactly con-
 servation-minded, but they do plan to consume their veldkos in advantageous
 order. They eat the perishable short-seasoned leaves and the few fruits as 262
 soon as they ripen. They leave until the dry season is advanced certain beds
 of roots and tubers that are edible the year around if they remain in the
 ground.

The headman of the band has the authority and the duty, according to 622
 !Kung social regulations, to plan the band's movements, to say to which 222
 veldkos area they will go and when, and, if the band separates temporarily
 into segments, to know where each segment is going and, in general, what
 veldkos it will consume. It is a matter of life and death to plan and control
 as best they can and not to travel for days, counting on food and finding that
 one segment of the band has eaten it all, unbeknown to the others.

Each type of veldkos and each area presents its problems of logistics, 222
 water being the determining factor in the plans, for usually water and 312
 veldkos are not in the same place. During the big rains and for several weeks 221
 after, the pans and vleys become shallow ponds and small, temporary water
 holes are filled. It is the time of relative plenty. The people find sufficient
 water to enable them to move about with comparative freedom in their coun-
 try, wherever there is something to gather. When the dry season sets in, 1415
 the problem is to carry enough water from the water hole to the veldkos area 237
 in ostrich egg shell containers and to carry enough veldkos back to the water
 hole. It is a ceaseless labor.

The distances the !Kung travel between water and fertile areas in these 684
 gathering trips vary from a few miles to twenty or thirty. The people do not
 manage greater distances except in the rainy season, when they go as far as
 seventy-five miles to a mangetti forest.

When the people go to gather mangettis or tsf, the men always ac-

in several different bands, and they may choose among them. A band that owned comparatively good resources would tend to attract more members than a band with scant veldkos. This flexibility of residence pattern is one of the reasons that one finds the bands of the interior of the Nyae Nyae region relatively in balance with their resources, and varying in size.

WATER • Two or more bands may share the ownership of a water hole. Water holes keep their own rough population balance because, if water is very scarce, people will go to live elsewhere when they have the possibility of doing so.

In the interior of this region, in roughly 8000 square miles, there are three water holes that can be called really permanent. In the driest years these do not fail. Four others dry up only in years of severe drought. Six more are semipermanent: in a very good year they may yield a little water right through, but in a dry year they are sure to dry up. When the semipermanent water holes go dry, the bands who own them may break up temporarily and the families may go to live with relatives who are at permanent water holes, or they may go as whole bands to another water hole where they have relatives.

Water is not owned as exclusively or as jealously as veldkos. Water seems to belong more to mankind, as the animals do, and the ownership of water holes emphasizes more the managing than the withholding of the water. The headman controls the water. His permission should be asked by travelers or visitors before taking water, "because he knows what he has and what can be done," we were told. We saw small temporary water holes marked with bundles of grass thrust into forked sticks. This was to tell visitors or travelers that the owners of the water hole were in residence, as it were, and were counting on the water. We believe that in these circumstances water would not be taken without permission. Occasions are not likely to arise where permission need be refused. The !Kung know where the others are, or are likely to be, at a given time and know how much water is available. They plan better than to get themselves into desperate situations.

One source of water appears to be owned by individuals. It is the rain-water that collects in hollow mangetti trees. The water in trees is not stolen by others who go to gather in the same mangetti forest. Water, incidentally, is the only beverage of the !Kung in the interior of the region. They have no alcoholic drinks and use no infusions of herbs.

HUNTING AND MEAT SHARING • !Kung hunting regulations do not confine the hunters to territories. The game animals belong to no one until they are shot, and the hunters may follow them anywhere the spoor leads and may cross the territorial boundaries of any band. If hunters have made a kill in the territory of a neighboring band, they would not fail to give a present of

553 properly in these matters, and the kin term they apply guides their behavior
602 with everyone they meet.

635 The other value is obvious. The !Kung of the whole Nyae Nyae region,
619 in their thirty-six separate bands or groups, are drawn together by a feeling
553 of belonging to an in-group. The familiar names and the use of the kin
601 terms make them expect from each other behavior suitable to kinsmen—
602 sharing food, gift giving, restraint from expressing jealousy or other hostilities, conforming to group opinion, all the things they do that are conducive to peaceful living together. This sense of belonging gives security and comfort to these people in whose language the word *dole*, which means "strange," means also "harmful" and "bad." They call themselves *ju /dassi*. *Ju* means "people"; */dassi* connotes something like "true" or "pure" and can be paraphrased as "just ourselves."

428 INHERITANCE PATTERN • The !Kung have no named, structured patriline-
613 ages, but they have a patrilineal emphasis. Inheritance passes from father
622 to eldest son, as does the succession in headmanship.

• 623 There is not much property to inherit. Land and the resources of food
768 and water are owned by the band, not privately by individuals. A considerable amount of an individual's personal property is destroyed at the time of his death. This is not done to provide implements for the spirits in the
772 after-life. The !Kung believe that the spirits of the dead have their own heavenly objects and need nothing from earth. It is done because no member of the family wants to use the common objects of the dead, which too vividly remind them of their loss. Only the more rare and important possessions are kept, such as assegais and fine ornaments. These are inherited by the eldest son. Failing a son, the spouse or a daughter or sibling or, failing these, some other close relative who was present would take the things. Whoever took them would be expected to give some of them to other relatives.

582 MARRIAGE • As I mentioned, the Nyae Nyae !Kung rarely marry outside
648 the region, although !Kung women not infrequently marry Tswana or Herero men in the border settlements.

584 First marriages are arranged by parents while the children are still young. Either the parents of the boy or those of the girl may first ask for the betrothal. Parents of boys have their eyes on every girl baby and may say to parents of an unborn infant, "If it is a girl, let us have her for our son."

581 No property settlements enter into the marriage choices or marriage arrangements among the !Kung. Rather, they say about the basis of their choice that they seek an upstanding family for their child to marry into, people who are not lazy and not "far-hearted" but who are dependable and generous and behave with propriety, obeying the social rules and the

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thighs, up the buttocks to the waist, and on the cheeks and forehead. 304
 The !Kung say the stripes are made only for beauty" and are in imitation
 of gemsbok—big, stately gray antelopes with spectacular black markings.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The only social grouping above the family in 621
 !Kung society is the autonomous band. A band is a group of families who
 live together, linked to one another and to the headman by kinship bonds,
 in a manner that will be illustrated presently. Nuclear families do not live
 alone among the !Kung. An extended family might do so, if it were a strong
 unit with enough young hunters and gatherers to sustain it; it would then
 be a band. Most of the Nyae Nyae bands were composed of several families 622
 and ranged in size from twenty or twenty-five to fifty or sixty members.

Each band belongs to its own territory, or, we can say, owns its territory 621
 and the resources within it. Two or more bands may belong to the same 622
 territory. The focus of the band's ownership of the territory is the headman, 623
 who is called *kxau* (owner). He does not own the resources as private,
 individual property is owned, to withhold or give as he pleases. Members
 born to the band have a kind of inalienable right of their own to the
 resources. The headman personifies those rights and gives them organiza-
 tion and continuity. The continuity is expressed by the attachment of the
 headmanship to the territory. If a headman leaves the territory to live else-
 where—except temporarily for bride service—he ceases to be headman and
 the headmanship falls on someone else who remains in the territory.

!Kung society accords to the headman the authority to coordinate the 622
 movements of his own people in relation to their consumption of resources,
 and his chief duty is to plan when and where the band will move. He
 should protect the resources from encroachment from outsiders.

When the band moves, the headman's position is at the head of the
 line. He chooses the site for the new werf and has the first choice of a spot
 for his own fire and scherm. He has no other rewards or prerogatives. He
 carries his own load and is as thin as the rest.

It is not a headman's duty, as headman, to instigate or organize hunting
 parties, trading trips, the making of artifacts, or gift giving, nor does he
 make marriage arrangements. Individuals instigate their own activities. A 622
 headman is not in any formalized way a judge of his people, nor must he 627
 punish a wrongdoer. He may have great influence, if he is an effective
 leader, but wrongdoing is judged and controlled by public opinion, usually
 expressed in talk. Occasionally a person who is wronged seeks to avenge
 himself by fighting, which is greatly deplored.

If a headman is too young or too old, or lacks personal qualities of 622

622 leadership, the people may turn quite informally to some other man for leadership in their daily life—ask him for help and advice, fall in with his plans. Such a leader has no authority and receives no honors or rewards.

Headmanship is inherited by the eldest son from the father. If that son dies or leaves the band, the headmanship passes to the next eldest son.

No strictly formulated rules, insofar as we know, provide for further succession. We have no observations of our own of situations in which a headman had no son.¹⁰

622 The rule of succession does not provide for a headmanship to pass
621 collaterally to a headman's younger brother. However, a younger brother
571 may set up a band of his own in the same territory if he does not prefer to live under the headmanship of his older brother or if he does not continue to live with his wife's people. The younger brother has his own rights to the veldkos and water that derive from his father and he can share them with his family and band. Nevertheless, as long as a son of the headman in rightful succession is living in the territory, he has higher authority and is responsible for the overall planning. Should the principal headman's band die out or realign itself, the collateral band led by the younger brother would become the principal one.

621 The bonds that bring the !Kung into membership in bands are the same
622 consanguineous and affinal bonds on which a nuclear family is formed:
602 the bonds of parent-offspring, siblings, and spouses. Everyone who lives in
571 a !Kung band is linked by one of these bonds with the headman, sometimes directly or sometimes in a chainlike manner through one or two other
[62] persons. A description of a typical band will illustrate this point. Band II of Gautscha has forty-one members. The headman, Gao Beard, has two
[592] wives and four young children. With Gao Beard live his younger brother, one of his younger sisters, each with spouse and children, and his elderly, dependent and widowed mother. Gao asked his first wife's father, Old ~~✶~~Toma, whom he likes very much, to join his band. Old ~~✶~~Toma brought with him into the band his wife, a married son with wife and child, two younger sons, his wife's sister, and her son by a now divorced husband.
[583] He also brought sixteen other persons—Gau and his people. Gau belongs to another band but was at the time living in Band II because he had married, as a second wife, Old ~~✶~~Toma's wife's sister and, middle-aged though they are, he was in bride service to her people. After a time Gau can choose whether to stay on in Band II or to go back to the band in which he originated. He said that he thought he would decide to stay with Old ~~✶~~Toma and Gao Beard because he likes Old ~~✶~~Toma and because Gao Beard has a mangetti grove.

621 People retain throughout their lives their membership in the band
423 in which they were born and their rights to its veldkos and water resources.

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If they leave the band they may return. Affines and the families of affines have equal rights to the resources while they are present but do not retain them if they leave. 621
423
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RELIGION

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS • In the many strange old tales of the !Kung appears a protagonist named ~~✗~~Gao!na—Old ~~✗~~Gao. He had supernatural powers, but he looked like a man and lived on earth. Like mankind, he was subject to passion, hunger, wrongdoing, failure, frustration, and humiliation, but men imagine his feelings in larger scale and as more grotesque than their own. Themes of incest, hunger, and cannibalism run through the tales. The !Kung claim that this old protagonist and the great god of their present belief are one and the same: they have the same names, but if the present great god is the old ~~✗~~Gao!na, he is mightily changed. 773

The !Kung now believe that there are two gods. The great god lives in the eastern sky where the sun rises; the lesser, in the western sky where the sun sets. The great god is the creator of all things. He created himself and named himself. He then created the lesser god and a wife for each of them. The wives bore them children. The great god gave names to all these beings. Then he created the earth and the water holes, the sky and the rain, the sun and the wind, the things that grow on the earth, and the animals with their stripes and colors, and he gave them names. He created a woman and then a man. He commanded the man and the woman and the animals to breathe, for without breathing they would not live. From the beginning he created men and women to be mortal. When mortals die he takes their spirits to the place where he lives in the eastern sky, where there is a certain tree that has no name. He hangs the spirits in the tree, makes a medicine smoke in a pot beneath them, and transmutes them into the /*gawwasi*, the spirits of the dead, who live in the sky with him and are his servants. He has a medicine with which he renews himself, the /*gawwasi*, and the other heavenly beings and thus keeps them immortal. 724

The great god gave men bows and arrows and poison and digging sticks and taught them how to shoot animals and dig for food. Everything men know he taught them. Having created all things, the great god is the owner and the master of all things and commands their movements. 725

To "praise" himself, the !Kung believe, the great god gave himself seven divine names and one human name. The divine names are *Hishe*, *Huwe*, *Kxo*, *!Gara*, *Gani ga*, ~~✗~~*Gaishi* ~~✗~~*gai* and /*Gauwa*. The human name is ~~✗~~Gao!na, the one he shares with the old protagonist. 776

Although there is not an absolute taboo upon saying the names of the

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77

office is hereditary. His authority is very slight, and apparently exercised mainly in regulating the movements of the people from place to place, and in leading in war. [621] [622]

Each band also acts as a unit in its relations with other bands of the same or of neighbouring tribes, and in such relations it is collectively responsible for the actions of any of its members. When differences arise they are confined to the bands concerned, and not participated in by the rest of the tribe. Occasionally, it is true, a weak band may seek and obtain assistance from a stronger neighbour, but such alliances are never of a binding or permanent nature.¹ [619] [621]

The band is also the land-owning group. Each band possesses its own hunting territory, to which it is restricted, and exercises authority over and specific rights within this territory only.² The members of the band roam about freely all over their own land, but do not trespass on their neighbours' territory, although single persons and small parties may occasionally pay short visits across the border, mostly for trading purposes. As a result of this territorial segregation it may often happen that the more widely separated bands of a tribe have no personal knowledge of or direct contact with each other. [423] [621] [438] [619]

There are no special boundary marks between the areas occupied by different hunting bands. The limits of each area are as a rule defined by various natural landmarks, such as sand dunes, koppies, river-beds, vleis, springs, or even trees. These are well known to the people themselves and carefully observed. In some cases the areas of different bands are separated by neutral zones, formed by belts of trees, open flats, watercourses, etc. Nobody will venture into these except during the course of a visit. In particular, however, each hunting territory is defined by the waterholes in it. These constitute the real property of the band. The encampments are always erected near them, all the game on the land around them or drinking at the water may be hunted only by members of the band, and similarly only they may gather "veldkos" (wild vegetable foods) in the vicinity. The infringement of territorial rights in this respect is one of the main causes of dispute between neighbouring bands, and almost invariably leads to bloodshed. [311] [361] [628]

¹ The relations between different bands are discussed more fully below in Chapter VI, a.v.
 "Relations with Other Bands"; vide p. 155

² Trenk, op. cit., 168; Kaufmann, op. cit., 148, 156; Passarge, op. cit., 31-2; Seiner, "Bereisung der Omaheke," 303; D. F. Bleek, Naron, 4; Fourie, "The Bushmen," 85; Lebzelter "Bei den Kua-Buschleuten," *Miss. anthrop. Ges. Wien*, lix (1928-9), SitzBer. (12).

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL HABITS AND CUSTOMS

DAILY LIFE AND FOOD

Daily and Seasonal Routine

THE life of the Bushmen is one long struggle for food. For their ²²¹ subsistence they rely entirely on the natural products of their environment: their animal food is obtained mainly by hunting, and occasionally fishing, while their vegetable food consists of edible plants, roots, and fruits growing wild in the veld. Save where they have been very considerably influenced by other peoples, they neither practise agriculture nor keep domestic animals which can supply them with food in the way of meat or milk. [177]

The very mode of their subsistence makes them all wanderers. As soon as the edible plants in the vicinity of one waterhole grow scarce, the people move on to another, following the movements of the game and the growth of the plants. In this way a few months are spent at one waterhole, then some months at another, perhaps at even a third or fourth, and it is often a year or more before the first is revisited.

In particular their movements are regulated according to the season ²²¹ and the distribution of the rainfall upon which they are mainly ³¹² dependent for their food supply. In the Namib Desert and in the ⁴²³ Central and Northern Kalahari each band has different dry and rainy season quarters, to which it resorts as the growth of veldkos or the movements of the game necessitate. The Namib Bushmen roam about the sand dunes of their region during the rainy season and well into the dry season, but as soon as the water and the indispensable /naras fruits found there are exhausted, they draw back into the mountains, where each band has its permanent waterholes.¹ Similarly the Bushmen in the Central Kalahari roam in the sandy plains during the rainy season, and still manage to live there for part of the dry season, even after standing water has disappeared, on succulent melons and roots; but when these also begin to fail the people are

¹ Trenk, "Buschleute der Namib," 166, 168.

221 compelled to turn back to permanent waterholes. Thus in the rainy
312 season the Alkwe, Tsaukwe, /Amkwe, /Dukwe, and Tserekwe all hunt
423 in the wide sandveld pierced by the bed of the Letyahau, keeping
to some extent to their respective hunting territories, but apparently
also hunting together peacefully in the most central parts of the region.
In the dry season, however, they turn back to the limestone pans of
the Ghansiveld and Mahuraveld and to the river-courses of the Tauche-
Botletle system, where permanent water is to be found.¹ The same
alternation of residence with the seasons occurs, as we have seen,
among the Tannekwe and the Hukwe, and may also be noted among
the Kung and the Auen in the Omaheke and Kaukauveld.²

[621] It is not only in alternation of residence that the change of season
makes itself felt. In some cases it also affects the very cohesion of the
band itself; for, as already mentioned, both among the Auen and
among some of the Central Kalahari tribes the members of the band
concentrate together during the rainy season when there is a more
abundant supply of food, but as the dry season comes on the families
scatter and wander off in different directions.

462 From their huts the people go out every day in search of food.
512 The women rise early, light the fire, and prepare the food for the
morning meal, which usually consists of veldkos left over from the
previous evening. After having eaten, the men may go out hunting
or visiting or engage in some other occupation, such as preparing
skins, weapons, and utensils. The women accompany one another in
search of veldkos and go out soon after the men have left. "One
may see a group of women and little children start off in one direction,
single file of course, then some men in another, then four or five boys
together, then girls, small and big, then some more men, and so on."
When food is obtainable at no great distance, the women are usually
back in camp towards midday. When they have far to go they may
not reach home till late in the afternoon. Wood is collected on their
way back. Immediately after their return they start the fires and
proceed to prepare the food, the younger married women and young
girls in the meantime fetching water from the neighbouring waterhole.
[264] Food is ready by the time the men arrive in the late afternoon, and the
evening meal, the principal meal of the day, is then eaten without
delay. Meals are taken in common by the members of the family,
512 each family eating at its own hut. Afterwards visits are usually
[574]

¹ Passarge, *Die Buschmänner der Kalahari*, 31-2.

² Seiner, "Bereisung der Omaheke," 303.

CHAPTER VI

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL LIFE

LAND TENURE

EACH hunting band among the Bushmen, as we have already noted, 423
claims rights of ownership over a certain stretch of land, and 621
vigorously resents trespass upon it by members of other bands.
Within the band land is owned in common. The hunting territory
belongs to the whole band, and all the members of the band have
an equal right to hunt and collect over any part of it and to use the
water in it. Often the members of the band are scattered apart, so
that the same territory is exploited by the inhabitants of several
different encampments. These encampments, as we have seen, are not 361
made up of any fixed number of families, but fluctuate a good deal
in size. Whatever their momentary disposition, however, their 221
inhabitants always roam within a definitely limited area, and it is
always the members of the same band who establish these different
encampments within its bounds.

As the Bushmen practise neither agriculture nor pastoralism, there 423
is no question of cultivation or grazing rights. There is said, however,
to exist a certain private ownership of land among the Auen, in the 222
sense that when a man burns a patch of veld in order to promote the
growth of veldkos on it, he alone has a claim to its products. Others,
even people living at the same encampment, may not gather veldkos
on this patch without his permission.¹ Somewhat analogous to this 222
are the private rights recognized by all Bushmen over objects found 422
in the veld. A man who finds an ostrich nest with one or two eggs,
for example, sticks an arrow in the ground close by as a sign of owner-
ship, and waits until the tale of eggs is complete before carrying them
off. Should another man take the marked eggs, the first finder follows
the spoor to the thief's hut, and demands them back. If they are 685
restored, there is no fighting, but the thief does not escape reproaches 626
for wrongdoing, especially from the neighbours of the finder; while
in case of refusal bloodshed almost inevitably follows. In the same

¹ Kaufmann, "Die Auen," 155.

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222 way private rights can be indicated over honey in a nest, or by a woman
 422 who has located a spot with a specially abundant supply of veldkos.
 Whoever removes anything from such places is regarded as a thief.¹
 It must be emphasized, however, that rights of this nature are only
 acquired by chance, and that apart from them there appears to be no
 [423] restriction at all upon the free exploitation of the hunting territory
 and all its resources by any member of the band.

HUNTING

224 Once they have passed through the puberty ceremonies, boys and
 [883] girls participate in the full economic life of the band. All the men
 [462] are hunters, and spend the greater part of their daily life in pursuing
 or ensnaring game. Their methods of hunting vary with the nature of
 the intended prey, and according to the season of the year.

Weapons

The principal method is by means of pursuit and the use of weapons.
 411 The latter amongst all the Bushmen consist primarily of the bow and
 arrow.² The bows are small, and on the whole fairly crude and of
 simple make (Plate IXd). They are as a rule prepared from the wood
 [824] of the *Grewia flava*, a thin length of which is cut and roughly shaped
 is such a way as to taper gradually almost to a point at the ends. The
 [283] string is made either from two thin sinews twisted together or some-
 [237] times, among the Northern tribes, from wood fibre worked into a
 [284] strong cord. It is attached by a simple slip-knot and wound tightly
 several times round the basal end of the bow-stave, to which a small
 leather collar or sinew band is usually fixed to prevent the string from
 slipping when hitched over it. The stave is then bent and the string
 knotted to the other end, where it is kept in place by a leather band.
 The bow is kept permanently strung. Its stave is frequently
 strengthened with additional sinew bindings, especially round the
 centre, which prevent it from splitting and also form a convenient
 grip for the hand.

The arrows are complex in structure and vary considerably in

¹ Hahn, "Die Buschmänner," 120; *idem*, in *Trans. S. Afr. Phil. Soc.*, ix (1896), p. xvii; Vialis, "The Masarwa," 32; Kaufmann, loc. cit.; D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 36; Lebaelter, "Bei den 'Kuh-Buschleuten,'" 13.

² Schapera, "Bows and Arrows of the Bushmen," *Man*, xxvii (1927), 113-17; cf. Stow, *Native Races of S. Africa*, 68-71; Kaufmann, op. cit., 143-4; van Rippen, "Notes on Some Bushman Implements," 80-1; Greischel, "Die Buschmannsammlung Hanneemann," 94-6, 99-100.

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224 where bush is scarce, frequently seek shelter during the day in the numerous anteater holes. Finding a morning spoor leading to one of these holes, the hunter, silently as a cat, creeps up to the hole and plants himself before it, leaving a small open space under the left arm, for which the buck charges, when it is pinned and dealt a stunning blow over the head with the kirri held in the right hand. In this way numbers of these animals are killed. The kirri is also used for knocking down hares and game birds; it is thrown from a distance of twenty-five to thirty feet, and generally stuns the game so that it is easily [222] secured. Birds are preferably aimed at just when they are rising from the ground, as the slightest blow will then upset their balance and bring them down before they have time to escape.

Bigger game, such as the giraffe, eland, hartebeest, ostrich, and springbok are generally hunted with the bow and arrow, which are used all the year round. As a rule the men hunt alone, or a man and boy together. They find the spoor of an animal and follow it, finally creeping up to the leeward side on hands and knees, using all possible cover, and then raise themselves gently to shoot. Or else they lie in wait for the game on its way to the water, or in the vicinity of a place where it comes to lick salt. The men hide themselves between stones, or dig a hole in the ground, piling up the earth in front and sticking green branches on top to deceive the game. Occasionally, again, several men surround game in a pan, some standing to leeward ready to shoot, while the others drive from windward, approaching from different quarters.

Once he has wounded an animal, the hunter takes up its trail and follows it leisurely, knowing that he will ultimately reach the corpse, if the poison on the arrow has been at all effective. There is always the great danger, however, that if the buck has run too far, and he takes too long to reach it, hyenas or the vultures may have got there first. Also care must be taken that the animal does not run out of the hunting territory, as it is then as good as lost, or, where the [423] [621] neighbouring band is friendly enough to permit of its being followed over the border, the meat must be shared with the members of that band. When at last he comes up with the buck the hunter, if it is not already dead, dispatches it with the spear or kirri. He then cuts [252] it up, roasts and eats some of the meat, and carries the rest home; or, if near the huts, he may carry the whole buck home. If it is too big to manage, he will light a fire to summon the other members of the band to the spot. Everybody shares in the meat, which is doled

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- 224 returning to the camp, sleep under the central tree and avoid sexual intercourse with his wife, lest the poison prove ineffective and the animal escape. The meat of an animal killed by a dog may not be
 [841] eaten by women or by any men whose wives are menstruating; this is to prevent bad luck befalling the dog in the pursuit of game. Any want of success is generally attributed to some chance accident; for example, a man who has had bad luck in hunting while his wife was menstruating will not hunt again while she is in that condition, nor will she eat any of the *inoe-di* at such times.¹

These practices and beliefs obviously represent only a small portion of what must be an elaborate series of usages relating to hunting, but they suffice to indicate how the Bushmen, fully aware of the uncertainty attendant upon their efforts, seek to relieve their apprehensions and to obtain confidence by the aid of magic and taboo.

COLLECTING

- 224 Hunting in the old days was unquestionably the principal source
 136 of subsistence in Bushman life. But with the decrease of the game
 648 in their region and with the enforcement against them of the game
 222 laws framed by the white man, its importance is diminishing, and at the present time the Bushmen depend very largely for the means of existence on the wild vegetable foods growing in the veld.

- [241] Agriculture in any form is altogether unknown to them in their traditional mode of life. The nearest they have got to it is found
 222 in the practice observed by the North-Western tribes of burning the
 224 veld at the end of the dry season.² This, it is said, is done primarily
 311 in order that the edible bulbs, roots, etc., should come up better during the approaching rainy season. It is also used, however, as a means of hunting, for the men spread round the fire in a semicircle and drive all the game rushing from it before them in a certain direction where some hunters are lying in wait; moreover, the new grass growing soon after the burning attracts the game, which returns to the area, and thus makes it good hunting ground. Incidentally the burning serves to kill off snakes, scorpions, and other noxious creatures. Men may only
 [423] burn in their own territory; to do so across the border, or to gather wood where others have burned, is a great offence. In former times,
 [622] among the Naron, the chiefs are said to have regulated the burning;

¹ Fourie, "Customs of the Hei-//om," 16; *idem*, "Bushmen of S.W. Africa," 102.

² Jodika, "Reise nach dem Okavango," *D. KolBl.*, xiii (1902), 491; Kaufmann, "Die Auln," 147, 156; D. F. Bleck, *Naron*, 17.

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made by themselves, and metal pots, spear heads, knives, trade beads, etc., which they obtain through the Heikum from the OvaKwangari and MaMbukushu further north. The Naron to the east trade their skins, and formerly also ivory and ostrich feathers, with the BaTawana to the north-east for tobacco and millet. Ostrich egg-shell beads are bartered to the Bantu by all the Bushman tribes. The Koon at Naosanabis in the south, a branch of the /nu//en, are known to make them especially well, and their beads are always in great demand, passing through the Naron and the Auen to the Bantu tribes further north and east, who pay highly for them. For a chain of these beads passing round the waist the MaMbukushu, for example, give a large basket of millet, the BaTawana a large roll of tobacco, the OvaMbo an iron spear head, and so on. The Naron also trade their skins to Europeans and BeChwana for tobacco, dagga, or trade goods, and the latter, again, they pass on to the Auen.

The extensive scale on which this trade is carried out would seem to imply the existence of regulated trading communications between the different tribes. Unfortunately, there is extremely little information bearing on this point. Markets are apparently not held, the transfer of goods, as far as can be determined, being effected almost entirely through special trading visits from one group to another. Kaufmann describes the way in which such trading visits are conducted among the Auen. A small number of men and women go to the camp of the band with whom they wish to trade, laying down their weapons beforehand. Permission to enter is then given, and the barter proceeds. He adds that even if two bands are at enmity, as often happens, women will, nevertheless, go from one to the other in order to trade. This statement, however, needs to be confirmed. Passarge also suggests that the Bantu tribes of this region probably send periodical trading caravans to the different Bushman tribes, and quotes as an illustration the fact that in former times at least the OvaMbo would, with the permission of the Bushmen, go on special trading visits to obtain copper in the Otavi district of South-West Africa.

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The economic life of the band, although in effect it approaches a sort of communism, is really based on the notion of private property.¹ The only thing owned in common is the land, and even here, as we

¹ Kaufmann, "Die Auen," 155-6; Seydel, "Aus der Namib," 304; D. F. Blosk, *Naron*, 36, 16; Lebzelter, "Bei den /Kun-Buschleuten," 13, 16.

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[423] have seen, individual rights may occasionally be recognized. All
 422 portable property is generally owned by individuals, and theft is
 [685] severely punished. Huts, which are really of no value, belong to the
 families occupying them; a man's clothes, weapons, skins, ornaments,
 utensils, and indeed everything that he makes belong to him alone
 to do with as he likes, and in the same way anything that a woman
 makes, e.g. her ornaments, or receives from her husband, e.g. her
 clothing, is her own property. A man is not free to dispose of the
 personal property of his wife without her permission. Lebzelter,
 867 indeed, goes so far as to assert that among the Kung the sense of
 private ownership is inculcated even into children. As soon as they
 are old enough, he says, their parents make for them small bows,
 digging-sticks, etc., and teach them that they themselves now own
 these objects and therefore must no longer take those of others.

422 Food, whether vegetable or animal, and water are also private
 22 property, and belong to the person who has obtained them. Everyone
 who has food is, however, expected to give to those who have none.
 Thus a man who shoots a buck or bird will cut it up, and share with
 the other people present—but the dividing is done by him, and the
 skin, sinews, etc., belong to him to be done with as he pleases. In
 the same way all veldkos is also shared by the members of the band.
 The result is that practically all food obtained is evenly distributed
 through the whole camp. But, as we have seen, caches of ostrich
 egg-shells containing water may be stored away, and these belong to
 the person who hides them and may not be used without his
 [685] permission; while private rights may also be acquired over wild
 honey or ostrich eggs, and theft in such cases is severely punished.

428 The question of inheritance rarely arises, as generally most of a
 [768] man's possessions, especially his weapons and clothing, are buried
 [431] with him. But during her lifetime a woman will often hand over her
 ornaments to her daughter; while among the Auen such of a man's
 belongings as are not buried with him, e.g. utensils and skins, are
 inherited by his eldest son. The younger sons and daughters get
 nothing, nor does the widow, but she keeps her own property. So,
 too, among the Namib Bushmen, according to Seydel, a man's
 weapons, clothing, sandals, cooking utensils, and hunting dogs are
 inherited by the eldest son. At the same time, he adds, the usage
 [425] exists that as soon as the eldest son thus becomes sole heir to his late
 father, all the property he has himself hitherto possessed, such as
 weapons, clothing, etc., must go to his next brother. Widows and

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619 Bushmen from all parts of the Ghansveld, even from different tribes,
621 owing to the abundance of animal food thus provided. And again
[221] Passarge states that in the Central Kalahari there are also common
[423] hunting grounds in which during the rainy season members not only
of different bands but also of several different tribes may be found
hunting together peacefully, although at other times of the year each
band carefully avoids going beyond its own area.

114 All this suggests that there must be some sort of machinery,
619 however imperfect or ill-organized, to regulate social contacts between
621 different bands. Unfortunately the information bearing upon this most
important point is so inadequate that it is extremely difficult to deter-
mine to what extent the bands are socially interrelated. There are
indeed one or two hints of common meetings at special times for
ceremonial purposes. Thus Kaufmann, in describing the boys'
[881] puberty ceremonies among the Auen, states that the initiates are drawn
together from several neighbouring villages,¹ while Lebzelter, in his
[574] preliminary account of the Kung, makes the tantalizingly brief statement
that in the months of March and April different bands come together
for great feasts.² Occasionally, again, a weaker band may seek and
726 obtain assistance from a stronger neighbour. Thus the men of several
619 Auen bands united with some Naron to attack another Auen band,
621 although once the fight was over the alliance was dissolved.³ Such
alliances are never of a binding or permanent nature, nor does it appear
that the different bands of the same tribe are commonly organized
together for political purposes. But the occurrence of such interrelations
as have just been noted definitely indicates that there must be some form
of regulated intercourse between neighbouring bands. Without further
research in the field, however, no additional light can be thrown upon
the nature and mechanisms of this intercourse.

578 On the other hand, the relations between neighbouring bands are
619 not always friendly. Homicide, trespass, theft, adultery and wife-
621 stealing give rise to quarrels and conflicts which generally assume the
628 form of a blood feud and may even lead to war.⁴ Trespass especially
[685] is a frequent cause of dispute, as all the Bushmen readily attack those who
648 encroach on their land. This applies not only to other Bushmen,
685

¹ Kaufmann, "Die Aua," 117.

² Lebzelter, "Bei den 'Kun-Buschleuten,'" 13.

³ Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, 114.

⁴ Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, 148, 114; Trenk, "Buschleute der Namib," 169, 170; Zastrow, "Ueber die Buschleute," 11; Seiner, "Bereisung der Omahaka," 303; D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 40; Fourie, "Bushmen of S.W.A.," 81.